

REMARKS

By way of the foregoing amendments, claims 2-11, 14 and 27-31 are currently pending.

Claims 1-17, 19, 22-25 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Schmuelling et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,603,758) in view of Akhtar et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,769,000). Prior to discussing this ground of rejection in detail, a brief summary of exemplary embodiments is provided below in order to highlight some of the advantageous characteristics thereof.

Exemplary embodiments describe systems and methods for providing internet protocol (IP) services from different internet service providers (ISPs) to a plurality of different IP enabled devices via an access provider network. For example, such embodiments enable a telephone or a computer connected to a router to have access to IP services from different ISPs using, for example, a single connection. Among other features, exemplary embodiments employ multiple IP addresses and selective mapping of those IP addresses as source to enable the provision of IP services from different ISPs to the various IP enabled devices associated with, for example, a particular local area network. Note in this regard, that although multiple IP addresses can be assigned to a particular access device (e.g., router), other features of these exemplary embodiments include the way in which these multiple IP addresses are assigned and the subsequent uses of these multiple IP addresses to enable independent servicing of IP enabled devices via different ISPs using, e.g., a single connection.

Turning now to the cited Schmuelling patent, this patent attempts to solve a completely different problem. Specifically, as described in column 1, lines 40-46 of the Schmuelling patent, this document is concerned with the provision of methods and apparatuses which enable cable customers to add a cable modem or other device to a local cable network and to be able to choose both the cable modem through which they access the Internet and the ISP who will provide them with that

access. Although Schmuelling provides for selecting between multiple ISPs over a single network, such a description addresses a completely different problem from that of these exemplary embodiments, e.g., to provide IP services from different ISPs over a single connection.

Thus, it is not surprising that there are a number of differences between the claimed combinations and the Schmuelling patent. For example, as recognized in the Final Office Action, Schmuelling does not teach or suggest details associated with the provision of multiple IP addresses to a network access device. Moreover, referring to the newly submitted independent claim 27, it is respectfully submitted that Schmuelling also fails to teach or suggest, among other features, the steps of assigning a first IP address from the access provider network to the access device, assigning a second IP address from the one of the plurality of different ISPs to the access device, determining whether a destination IP address associated with the IP traffic is associated with the access provider network, and then forwarding, if the destination IP address is not associated with the access provider network, the IP traffic to the one of the plurality of different ISPs using the second IP address as a source address of the IP traffic and otherwise, if the destination IP address is associated with the access provider network, forwarding the IP traffic to the access provider network using the first IP address as the source address of the IP traffic. As can be seen from the aforescribed combination of method steps from claim 27, exemplary embodiments provide both for the assignment of multiple IP addresses to an access device which interconnects IP enabled devices with different ISPs, and also for specific uses of those multiple IP addresses, for example, selected use of different ones of the assigned IP addresses as source IP addresses based on various criteria. Similar comments apply to newly submitted, independent system claim 31.


Turning now to the secondary patent (Akhtar), this document is submitted in the Final Office Action as an alleged teaching of providing both a permanent IP address and another IP address. It is noted that Akhtar is concerned with providing IP mobility and an architecture framework for such mobility. Thus, like Schmuelling, it is respectfully submitted that the patent to Akhtar is also concerned with

addressing a different problem than these exemplary embodiments. Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that no combination of Schmuelling or Akhtar would have motivated one of ordinary skill in the art to have arrived at Applicants' newly submitted claimed combinations including those steps described above with respect to Schmuelling. This is true because Akhtar also fails to teach or suggest the specific assignment of two IP addresses from two different portions of a network, and which are also used in the specific, claimed, manners identified above in the discussion of Schmuelling.

All of the objections and rejections raised in the Office Action having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this response or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (540) 361-1863.

Respectfully submitted,

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